



05/10/43/3-2

November 22, 2004

Chairman Michael Powell
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

RE: WC Docket No. 03-133

Chairman Powell:

I write today to urge the Federal Communications Commission not to impose additional charges and fees on enhanced prepaid calling cards. One consumer segment in particular -- Latinos -- stands to disproportionately endure the brunt of this proposal.


The NALEO Educational Fund's purpose is to empower the Latino community to participate fully in American democracy. Our constituency consists of public officials who represent the rapidly growing Latino community and their expanding socio-economic interests. As such, regulations that that injure the Latino consumer work against our membership's core mission.

At this time, costs for the most essential commodities, such as gasoline and dairy products, sit at all time highs while interest rates are beginning to rise after historic lows. Middle class and lower-income Latinos are struggling to keep pace with the cost of living. Prepaid calling cards deliver affordable phone services to a significant portion of the Latino community -- over 40% of Latino's nationwide use them. To impose additional fees on prepaid calling card users exacerbate the effect of the economic challenges many Latino communities already face.

The cards are especially essential for low-income families who cannot afford home phone service or a cell phone. Not surprisingly, 75% of card users earning under \$20,000 a year use the cards regularly. These prepaid cards often become the principal means by which card users stay in touch with their family and friends.

I urge the FCC to keep in the mind the best interests of Latinos, the second largest population group in America, and end any effort to impose new charges and fees on prepaid calling cards.

Sincerely,


Arturo Vargas
Executive Director

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List ABCDE

ccs: Commissioner Michael Copps
Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy
Commissioner Kevin Martin
Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein

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